JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
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JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Once upon a time, there lived a poor widow who had only one child named Jack. She spoiled him by giving him everything he asked for, so he grew up lazy and disobedient. Soon her savings were spent and everything was sold, except a cow. Having no food in the house, she decided to sell the cow and asked Jack to take it to the butcher in the village.

Off he started with the animal for the village. On the way, he met a man who asked him where he was taking the cow. Jack answered that he wanted to sell it. The man held some curious beans in his hands. They were all of different colors. He quickly noticed that Jack liked them; and when he offered to pay for the cow, with all the beans in his bag, the silly boy agreed to the bargain.

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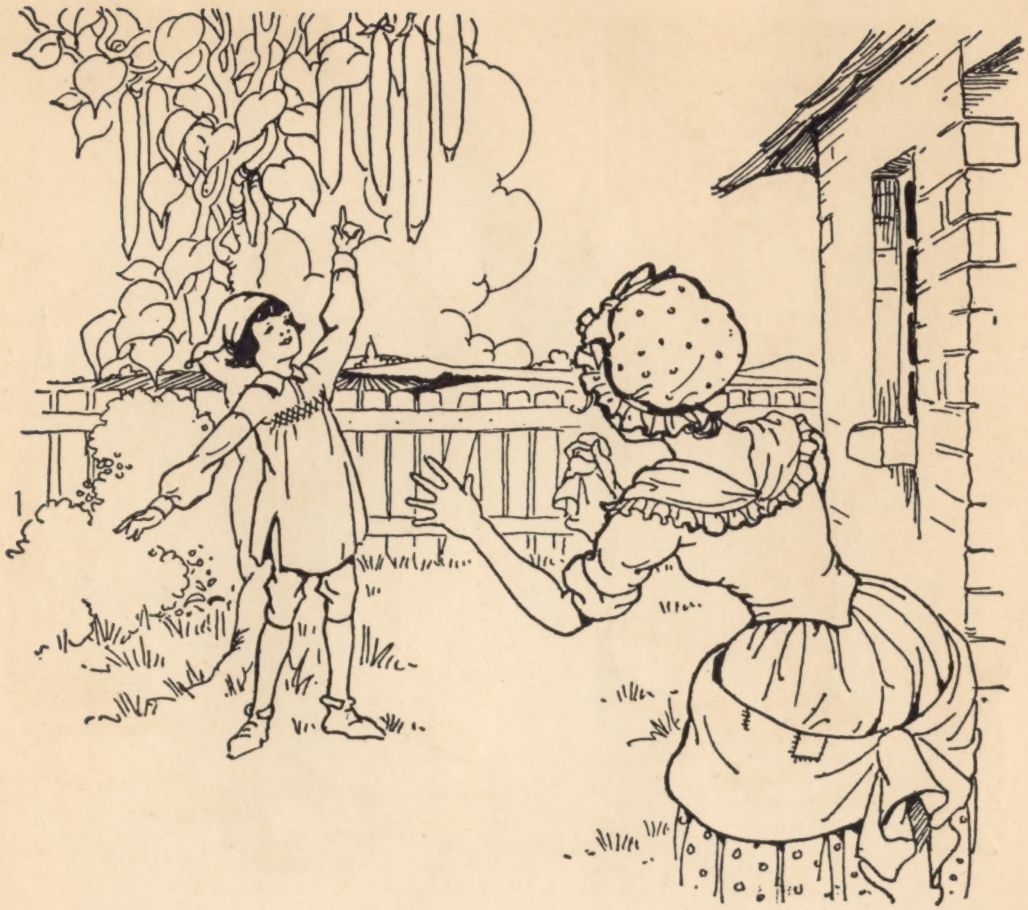
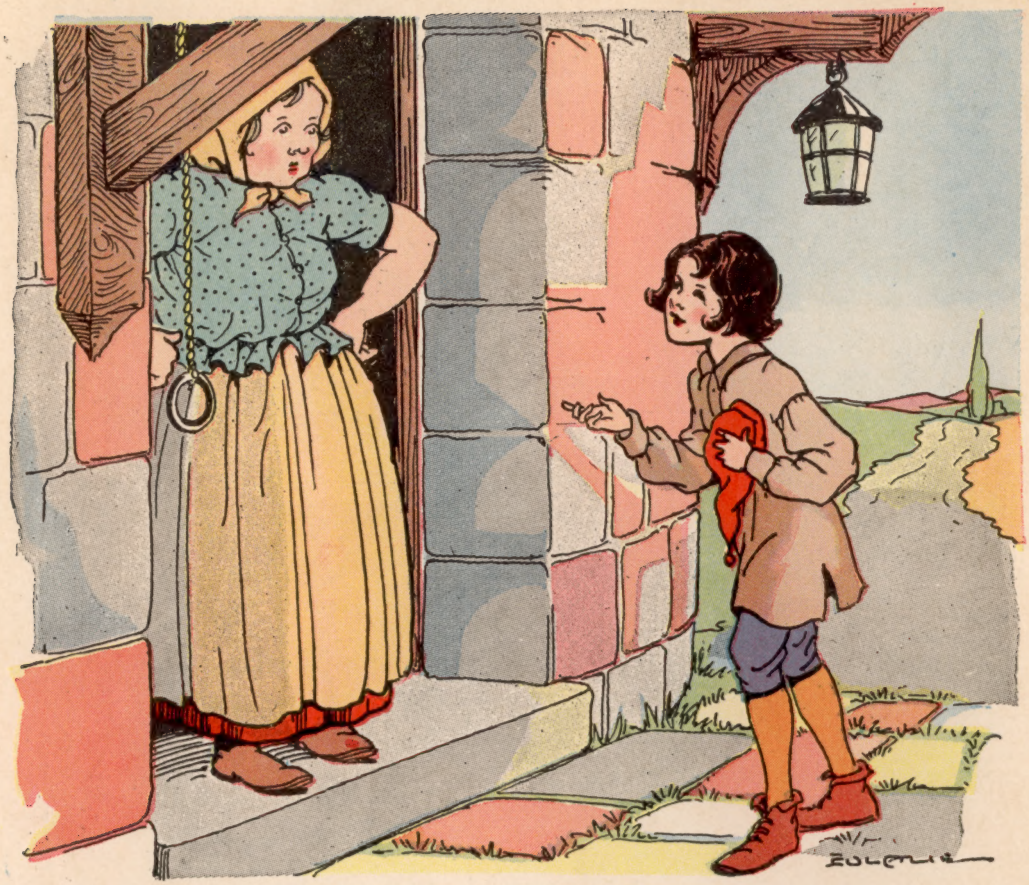


When Jack returned home and told his mother what he had done, she was very angry. She took the beans and threw them out of the window into the garden. That night they both went hungry and supperless to bed.

Next morning, Jack and his mother were surprised to find that the beans had taken root and the stalk was like a ladder, that reached up beyond the clouds.

At once, he made up his mind to climb it; but his mother begged him not to. In spite of her tears, he started and after climbing for a long time, came to a strange country. Walking along, he met an old woman.

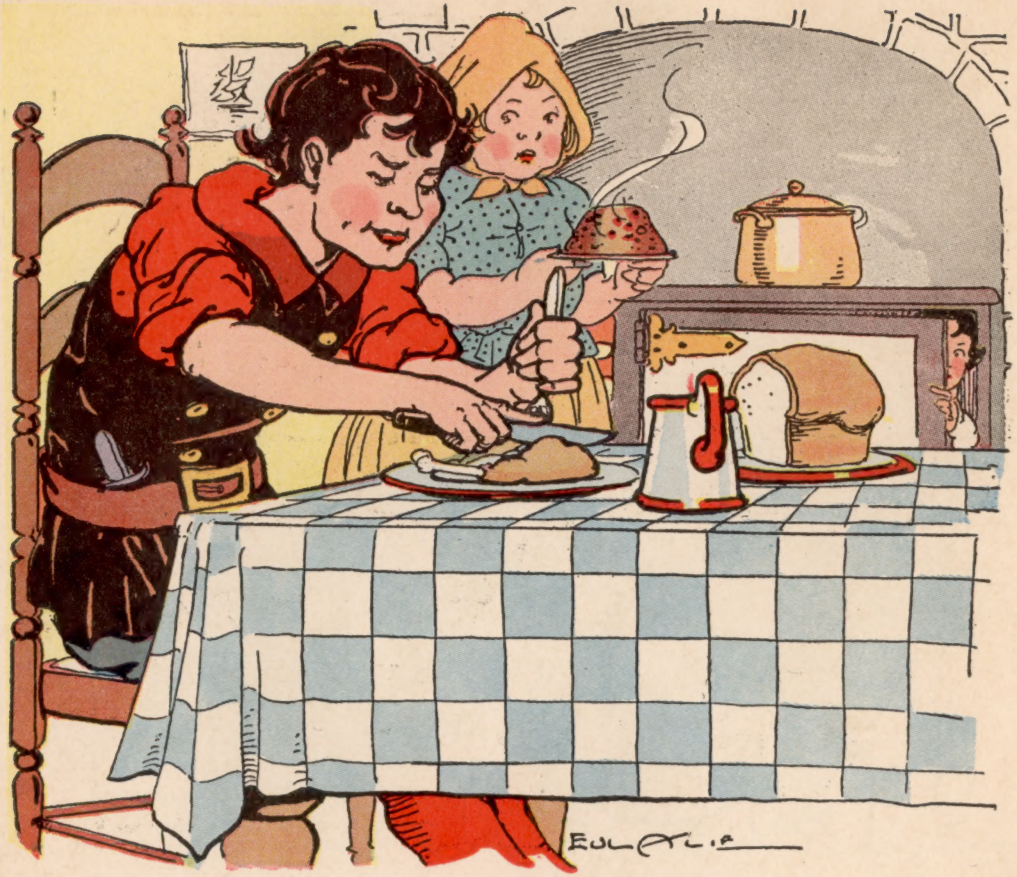


"Young man," said she, "I am your Fairy Godmother. Listen carefully to what I shall tell you.

"Years ago, when you were a small boy, a wicked giant stole everything your father had. Soon after that your father died. The giant lives in this country. You must punish him for his wickedness. It is right that you should take from him whatever you wish, for everything he has belongs to your mother and you.

"Follow this road and you will soon come to the castle where he lives."

Jack started along the road and soon came to a large castle. A woman was standing at the door. Jack asked her to give him food and a night's lodging.



"My husband is a very powerful giant. He puts all who come here into a dark dungeon," she said. But Jack begged her to take him in for the night.

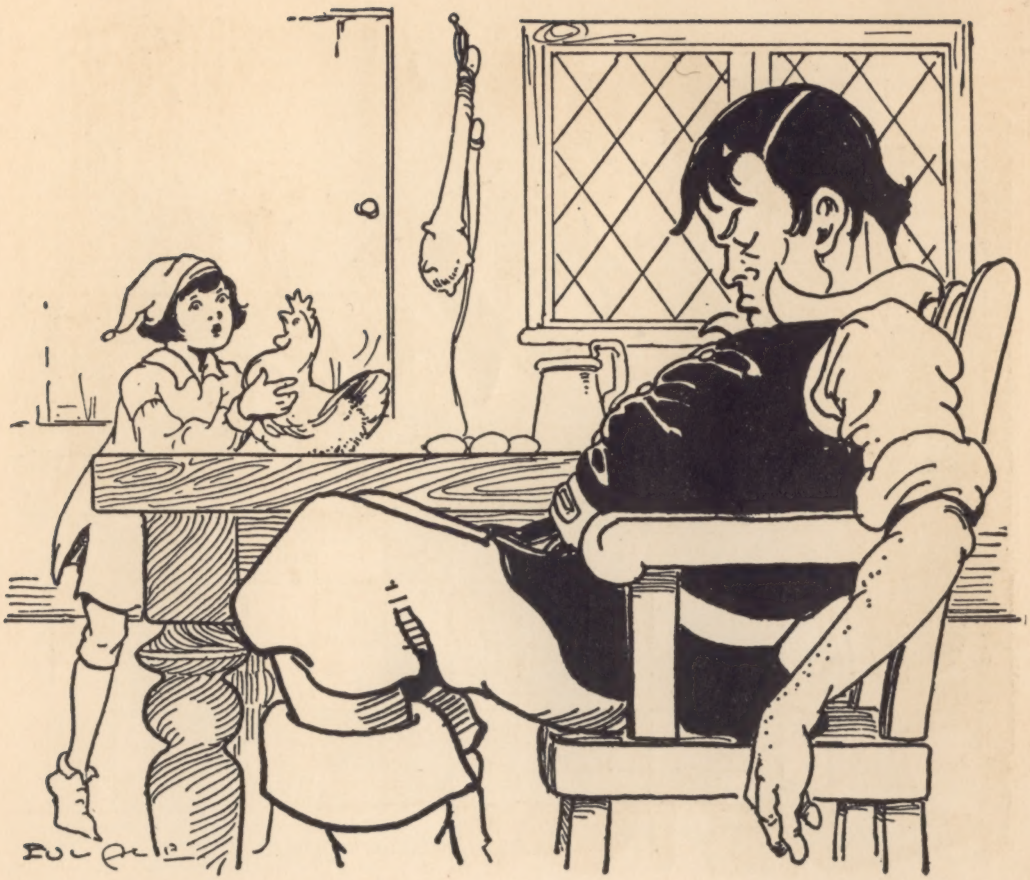
At last the woman took him in and led him through a long hall into the kitchen, where she gave him plenty to eat and drink.

Soon Jack heard a loud knock at the door. The woman quickly pushed him into a great oven and went to let her husband in.

"Wife, who is here? I heard voices," roared the giant.

"You have keen ears," answered his wife. "Surely there is no harm in my speaking aloud."

"Get my supper," roared the giant. His wife spread the table with food.



After gorging himself, the giant called for his pet hen. Jack peeped out from the oven and saw the giant set the hen on the table.

"Lay, lay, my pretty hen,
My pretty hen, my pretty hen.
Lay an egg of gold I pray.
Lay, lay, lay."

cried the giant. Every time he repeated this, the hen laid an egg of pure gold. Soon he fell asleep and his snores filled the room.

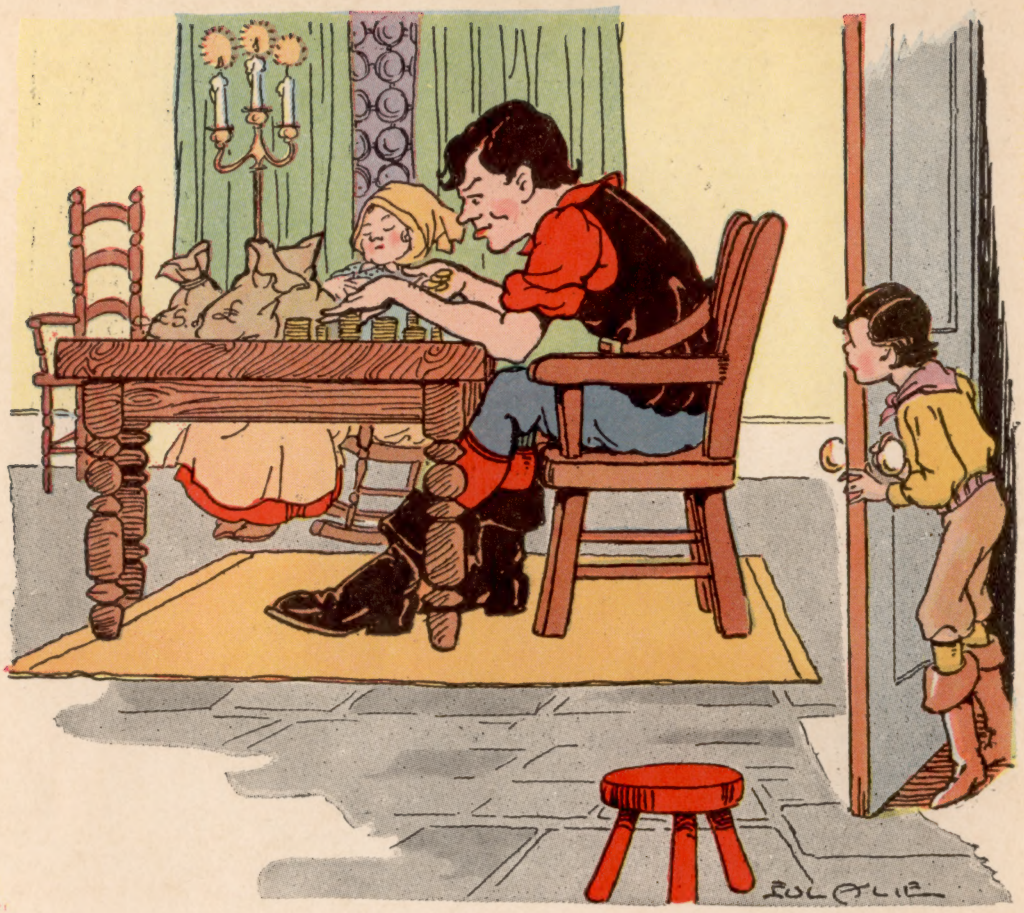
Jack slipped softly over the floor and took the little hen under his arm. Down the long hall he tip-toed and out the door. He ran

quickly to the beanstalk. Down he climbed and reached his mother's garden safely.

"Mother, mother," he shouted. "I have brought you a hen that lays eggs of gold." Every day the hen laid an egg of gold, which they sold and soon became rich. But Jack was not satisfied. He wanted to climb the beanstalk again and pay the giant another visit.

One day he told his mother he was going to climb the beanstalk again. She begged him not to go; but Jack made up his mind he would. He dressed himself entirely different; and one morning before his mother was awake, he climbed the beanstalk.

He reached the giant's castle in the evening. His wife was standing at the door as before. At first, she refused to take him



in; but finally she led him into the kitchen and fed him as she had before. Soon the giant's heavy footsteps shook the house. The wife hurried and hid Jack in a closet.

"Wife, I smell something," he roared.

"The cat caught a mouse," answered his wife.

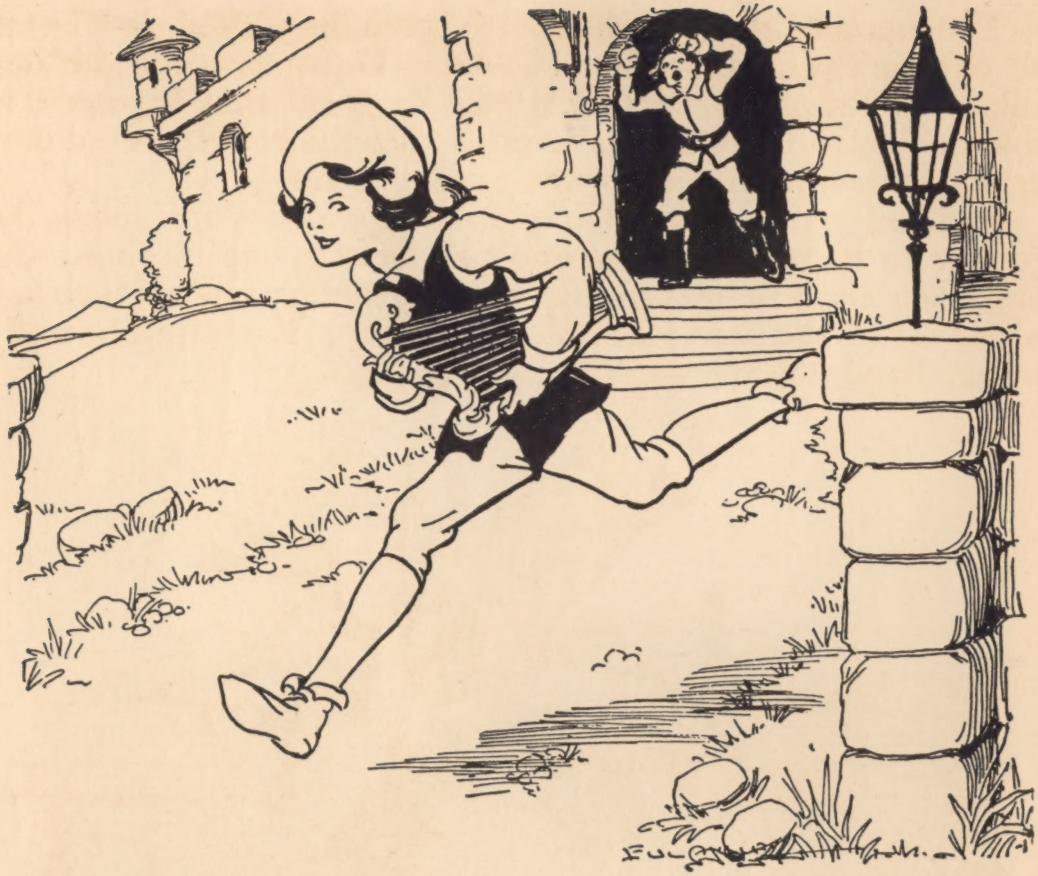
This satisfied the giant and after eating a hearty supper, he said: "Wife, I must have something to amuse me. Bring me my bags of money."

Jack peeped from his hiding place and saw the giant counting over and over his bags of gold. Soon the giant fell asleep and began to snore. His wife fell asleep also.

Softly Jack stepped out on the floor. He picked up two big bags of gold and started to the beanstalk. It was some time before he reached it because the bags were very heavy. Down the beanstalk he climbed and reached the cottage safely. He ran to his mother and gave her the bags of gold.

For three years Jack did not climb the beanstalk. Then he felt he must do so. Again he dressed himself differently and climbed up to the top.

He found the road and soon reached the castle. The woman again did not want to let him in at first; but at last she did and hid him in a big copper kettle.



When the giant returned in the evening, he shouted, "Wife I smell something," and began to search the room. Luckily, the giant ended his search without opening the kettle.

After he had finished his supper, he ordered his wife to bring his magic harp. It was a most beautiful harp; and when the giant said "play," it played the most beautiful music. Soon the music lulled the giant to sleep.

Jack softly crept out of the kettle and picked up the harp. But the magic harp called out, "Help, master, help!" The giant woke up and started after Jack; but he had eaten so much that he could hardly stand. Jack managed to reach the beanstalk and quickly started down, with the giant after him.

The moment Jack reached the bottom, he picked up a hatchet and cut the beanstalk off at the roots. Down crashed the beanstalk with the giant. His fall was so great that his neck was broken. Jack's mother was happy to see the beanstalk cut down, her son safe, and the end of the wicked giant.

Suddenly, the Fairy Godmother appeared and made Jack promise to be forever good and obedient to his mother. Jack gladly promised to be a dutiful son and told his mother how sorry he was for all the worry he had caused her. Ever after, he and his mother lived happily together.

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No wonder they look most surprised!
The beanstalk grew so high

Jack and his mother thought perhaps
That it might touch the sky.

I think it would be fun to climb
If one took greatest care

But, if it grew in my backyard
I *know* I wouldn't dare.